

# DPC Newsletter

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## Delta Levees a Highlight of Science Conference

The biennial Bay-Delta Science Conference was held October 4-6 at the Convention Center in Downtown Sacramento. The Conference consisted of talks and poster sessions on numerous issues of interest in the Bay-Delta system, including water quality, habitat restoration, watershed conditions, contaminants, and fisheries populations, to name just a few. There were also presentations on integrative science — using the information that's been gathered to date to aid in policy decisions — and environmental justice.

In light of the levee break and flooding on Jones Tract earlier this year, this year's Conference also had a unique focus on Delta levees, a topic which many stakeholders feel has received inadequate attention when compared to other components of the CALFED Bay-Delta program. The first day of the Conference contained a series of talks and presentations on Delta levee issues, relating to the link between Delta island subsidence and levee stability, new technologies being used to stabilize levees with minimal use of rock (riprap), emergency response procedures and needs, and how the levee break affected water exports and fish populations in the Delta.

Of particular note is the presentation by Dr. Jeff Mount, U.C. Davis (he noted his opinions are not necessarily shared by his peers on the Bay-Delta Program's Independent Science Board) in which he stated that there is a backlog of about \$100 billion to achieve PL84-99 standards for Delta levees, while the Jones Tract breach was a \$50-\$100 million failure, calling into question the level of priority levee maintenance funding should receive by the Bay-Delta Program.

In addition, there was a DWR staffer who opined that not all Delta levees are essential to the integrity of the State and Federal water projects, and then referred to the Jones Tract levee break as "a private levee problem [which] became a Statewide concern". However, participants also heard some optimism over the use of new technology to detect boils and other potential levee problems before they occur.

In other CALFED news, President Bush signed a four-year, \$395 million spending bill, HR 2828, which authorizes the participation of federal agencies in carrying out the Bay-Delta program. The program has been administered primarily by the California Bay-Delta Authority for the last few years because federal agencies lacked the formal authority to implement certain aspects of the program. The bill specifies the money will be used for water quality and supply reliability, the Environmental Water Account, Delta levees, and administration.

### Mark Your Calendars!

- **Delta Protection Commission** Thursday, November 18, 2004, 6:30 p.m. **\*Note New Meeting Location:**  
Courtland Auditorium, 180 Primasing Street, Courtland
- **DPC Recreation Citizens Advisory Committee** Wednesday, December 15, 2004, 1-3 p.m.

*Unless noted otherwise, all meetings are held at the Jean Harvie Community Center in Walnut Grove. Please call (916) 776-2290 if you need directions.*

## Legislative Update

The Commission tracked three bills over the second half of the legislative session in 2004: AB 2476, SB 86, and SB 1155. All three of the bills passed both houses of the Legislature and were sent to Governor Schwarzenegger for his signature by the September 30, 2004 deadline.

**AB 2476** (Wolk) originally proposed some changes to the membership of the Commission, but later deleted these changes. The language also required the Commission to review and update its Land Use Plan, as well as identify lands in the Secondary Zone that, if developed, would impact Primary Zone resources. This bill was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger (see discussion under SB 86, below), although the Commission is still required to report on its progress in updating its Plan and evaluating the aforementioned lands in Secondary Zone, as part of the budget bill passed earlier this year.

**SB 86** (Machado) was a proposal for a Delta Conservancy Program to be administered by the State Coastal Conservancy in active consultation with the Commission. The intent of the legislation was to ensure that the Delta region received consideration in future bond measures as an area in which grant funds should be made available. This bill was also vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

In one veto message for both AB 2476 and SB 86, the Governor cited a lack of a coordinated approach in dealing with Delta resources, and advocated building upon existing programs rather than creating new ones. In his message, Governor Schwarzenegger stated that neither bill addressed the recommendations contained within the Resources Agency report on the Commission that was submitted to the Legislature this year, and added that the bills also fail to recognize and coordinate with ongoing habitat and conservation programs in the Delta.

**SB 1155** (Machado) proposed that Dept. of Water Resources, in consultation with Secretary of the Interior, formulate a plan to meet the existing permit and license conditions for which DWR has an obligation, prior to increasing the existing permitted diversion rates at South Delta pumping plants. The intent of the legislation was to avoid the fast-tracking of the South Delta Project and Operations Criteria and Plan, which cumulatively would result in more pumping from the South Delta, before addressing Delta water quality needs. Governor Schwarzenegger signed this bill.

## New Faces on the Commission

This month's elections have opened up possibilities for changes in Federal, State, and local government, and the Delta Protection Commission is not immune to such changes itself. Several Commissioners have announced that they will no longer be serving on the Commission for various reasons:

Chairman **Patrick N. McCarty**, who has served on the Commission since its first meeting in January 1993, opted not to run in the Central Delta Water Agency's election; **Mike Scriven** was elected to become Mr. McCarty's replacement.

**Ruth Forney**, former Solano County Board of Supervisors representative, lost an election earlier this year and will be replaced by new Solano County Supervisor **Mike Reagan**.

**Augie Beltran**, who represents San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) on the Commission, has resigned his seat on the Commission. A replacement for Mr. Beltran will need to be formally approved by SJCOG.

Finally, **Marci Coglianese** has announced that she will be retiring as the Mayor of Rio Vista; this means she will no longer remain on the Commission as Association of Bay Area Governments' (ABAG) representative. Like SJCOG, ABAG will need to formally appoint a replacement for Ms Coglianese.

In other news, staff is pleased to announce that Commissioner **Robert Calone**, who represents West Delta reclamation districts, was successful in his bid to remain on the Commission. Mr. Calone, like Mr. McCarty, has served since the Commission's inception; this will be his fourth term.

We have enjoyed working with these Commissioners, and have appreciated the unique perspectives each brought to the meetings. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors, and look forward to working with our new Commissioners in the future!

## Consultant Selected for Delta Recreation Master Plan

The Commission is pleased to announce that it has finalized a contract with The Dangermond Group, a consulting firm specializing in recreation planning based in Sacramento, CA. The Commission received a \$225,000 grant from the Boating and Waterways Commission to complete an analysis of the needs and opportunities associated with water-based recreation in the Delta. The Commission has hired a consultant to perform this analysis, and offered its staff to assist by updating the Commission's 1997 Inventory of Delta Recreation Facilities. The money must be spent by June 30, 2005. Commission staff continues to search for funds to analyze land-based recreation in the Delta, to supplement the analysis that will be undertaken under the Commission's contract with The Dangermond Group.

Commission staff has completed its initial draft of the update of the 1997 Inventory of Delta Recreation facilities; the document will be considered by the Commission at its November meeting. The document contains updated information on all marinas and parks located within the Delta's Primary and Secondary Zones, and incorporates information from various sources including the CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation's Outdoor Recreation Plan (2002), the Delta Boating Needs Assessment completed in 2002 by The Dangermond Group for the Dept. of Boating and Waterways (DBW), the Statewide Boating Needs Assessment issued by DBW, and numerous websites on the Internet.

The updated Inventory will likely be posted on the Commission's website, to give the public an opportunity to review and comment on the revisions. The Commission's website is [www.delta.ca.gov](http://www.delta.ca.gov). You may also obtain a hard copy of the updated Inventory by calling Commission staff at (916) 776-2290.

## Commissioners Tour Liberty Island & Vicinity

On October 28, 2004, several Delta Protection Commissioners, staff, and members of the public boarded Dr. Jeffrey Hart's *Tule Queen* pontoon boat for a round-trip excursion to Liberty Island; the island is located in the northwestern part of the Delta at the lower end of the Yolo Bypass flood control facility. The tour, which originated at Dr. Hart's Hartland Nursery on Steamboat Slough, included commentary on early Delta history as well as more recent developments relating to the area.

In 1997, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's Ecosystem Restoration Program awarded nearly \$9 million in grant funds for the fee acquisition of Liberty Island to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). At that time, USFWS had nearly completed an environmental document which lay out the boundary for a proposed North Delta National Wildlife Refuge which included Liberty Island, as well as neighboring Prospect Island and Little Holland Tract. However, CALFED could not have legally offered this grant to USFWS in the absence of a management plan for the property, so CALFED granted the funds instead to Trust for Public Lands (TPL), a nonprofit entity, to hold the property until USFWS could complete a management plan and take ownership of the property as part of the Refuge. The Refuge boundary and management plan were never completed, and under TPL's ownership, the majority of Liberty Island has flooded because the levees were not maintained.

Dr. Hart pointed out how the flooding of Liberty Island is currently affecting infrastructure in its vicinity. For example, winds across the flooded island conjure up significant waves, which are eroding the levees of neighboring islands, including the Deep Water Ship Channel to the Port of Sacramento. He suggested that

some geotechnical fixes, such as the use of brush boxes and/or floating log booms and the planting of native vegetation, might help alleviate some of these waves and keep them from continuing to erode neighboring levees.

The group also discussed some potential future management options for Liberty Island, as well as Prospect Island and Little Holland Tracts, both of which are in public ownership by federal agencies who are looking to divest themselves of the properties. The issue has been, and continues to be, the lack of a consistent funding source for maintenance of the properties.

## Delta Holiday Celebrations

Want to find out about some fun activities going on in the Delta? The Delta Chambers and Visitors' Bureau website, [www.californiadelta.org](http://www.californiadelta.org), has recently been updated, and it contains a calendar of events scheduled at Delta venues throughout the holiday season. Just a few events happening at Delta marinas and resorts include Thanksgiving fishing derbies, Thanksgiving potluck dinners, and numerous lighted boat parades. Complete information on all events happening in the Delta over the holidays and year-round are available at [www.californiadelta.org](http://www.californiadelta.org).

The Delta Protection Commission and its staff want to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

***Promoting the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta's agricultural, recreational, and wildlife values since 1993.***

Delta Protection Commission  
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